

N U R T U R E  
**F A I T H**  
with  
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Vintage Sand Pails

**READ:** Deuteronomy 33:19 (Common English Bible)

*“They call all sorts of people to the mountain, where they offer right sacrifices. It’s true: They’re nourished on the sea’s abundance; they are nourished on buried treasures in the sand.”*

**MEDITATE:**

A throwback beach toy, vintage sand pails “carry summertime nostalgia in spades,” writes Betsy Cribb in a recent issue of *Coastal Living* magazine.<sup>1</sup> Cribb laments the loss of the old metal beach pails that have now given away to their plastic counterparts. The first of these colorful metal sand pails popped up on American beaches in the mid-1800s. But it would be another 30 years, when trains made travel to the beach available to a wider population that the little pails skyrocketed in popularity. Cribb writes that early versions were hand-painted in just one or two colors and lacquered for a glossy finish. But chromolithography (a multicolor printing process) enabled toy-makers to crank out pails with detail illustrations in bright, saturated hues. Original metal sand pails are now in demand by a new generation as great decorative and collectible pieces as a plant holder or vintage décor piece for beach homes and cottages.

Often, children used sand pails for building sandcastles – some pails included a shovel and a variety of molds with which one could make interesting sand sculptures. Also popular with children was the use of the pails, with contrasting handles, to gather collectibles from the sea and the beach such as seashells, sea glass, buttons, and pebbles. The ocean and the shore presented gifts in abundance for the curious seeker with the determination and energy to scan the water and sand for them. With lighthearted and cheerful illustrations, these metal sand pails offered families colorful, and inexpensive, mini-beach playsets that provided hours of enjoyment for their children.

Here, in this rich passage from Deuteronomy, God speaks of extracting from the sea’s abundance the nourishment the people required and gathering multiple treasures from the sand. As children on our beaches, running cheerfully with sand pail in hand, collecting from the abundance of God’s varied gifts, God invites us to notice and collect the gifts God has given us. The days of limited resources for God’s people are over. God has a new lifestyle in mind for us. The time of struggle has past and now, as the people settled in God’s promised territory, they would be nourished on, “the sea’s abundance; they are nourished on buried treasures in the sand.” The function of these few verses is to shift the focus from Israel’s behavior to God’s ultimate purpose to bless God’s people.

And here is the good news! The law of God, with all its demands upon the people, is thus subordinated to the overriding purpose – and desire – of God for his people. God’s love and concern for the welfare of the people is declared in spite of the people failing God and one another. In the end, our disobedience to God will not stop God from blessing us. God simply cannot help but to shower blessings upon those God loves. This becomes an occasion for joy in every aspect of our lives – an occasion for us to respond by coming before God, on God’s mountain, where we present “right sacrifices” that we might share God’s blessings with others.

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<sup>1</sup> Betsy Cribb, “Vintage Sand Pails: The throwback beach toys carry summertime nostalgia in spades.” *Coastal Living*, July/August, 2017, page 24.

